

Remarks

We thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter for claims 7-15, 18-23 and 27. However, they have not been rewritten in independent form at this time as we believe the following comments traverse the rejections to the inventing claims.

We respectfully submit the amendments to the specification and claims address paragraphs 1-26 of the Official Action.

With respect to section 28 of the OA, we respectfully submit that the rejection is deficient, as it does not set out how the cited sections teach the claimed subject matter. In particular, the rejection does not demonstrate how the cited art teaches:

“checking a **state of a control bit** that specifies whether to assemble an output signal from multiple virtual tributary (VT) connections or handle the output signal... and switching a predetermined number of entries together based on the state of the control bit.” (emphasis added)

We note that the cited sections refer to an STS signal holding a mapped VT signal, and "The VT switch module 36 first separates the STS-1 signal into VT level signal, then executes a VT pointer process and VT level cross-connection, and after multiplexing to the STS-1 signal, outputs the same to the STS switch module 34. "

However this does not equate to the claimed subject matter. The reference does not teach checking the state of a control bit nor does it teach switching based on the state of the control bit as claimed. The VT pointer process is more complicated than checking the state of a control bit. Indeed, one of the benefits of the claimed invention is that a VT switch can be also used as an STS switch by using one bit of information to set a mode instead of having to provision 29 or more individual registers (which would be required by a conventional VT switch which requires at least one connection entry for the transport overhead columns and one for each of the columns that normally carry the VT1.5 signals). By reducing the amount of information required to provision the switch, the time it takes to re-provision the switch during

a network re-arrangement (e.g., a protection switch) is reduced (i.e. quicker protection switch times).

Furthermore, we remind the examiner that the claim is to be interpreted from the perspective of a person skilled in the art.

We submit a person skilled in the art will understand that "handling" or "assembling" differentiate between, for example, switching the output signal in its entirety based on a single connection entry in the case of "handling" and switching each VT connection separately in the case of an "assembled" output signal which is multiplexed from the separate VT signals. For example (as shown in our Fig 3) if the

Control bit is set: output STS is switched in its entirety based on a single connection entry (1 connection entry of 29 is used, thus 1 entry drives the switch control circuits and the rest of the columns are automatically 'handled' by the control circuit without having to read the 28 other connection entries). However, if the

Control bit is not set: output STS is assembled by multiplexing together the overhead and 28 VT1.5 signals from the sources that are specified in the connection list (all 29 connection entries are used).

Accordingly, we respectfully submit the subject matter of claims 3-6, 25, and 26 would not have been obvious for the reasons given.

Accordingly, we respectfully submit the rejections have been traversed. Withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of the application is hereby requested.

No fee is believed due for this submission. However, Applicant authorizes the Commissioner to debit any required fee from Deposit Account No. 501593, in the name of Borden Ladner Gervais LLP. The Commissioner is further authorized to debit any additional amount required, and to credit any overpayment to the above-noted deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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